

Hi

The 2 screen examples are to help students avoid 2 problems.

Some students assumed that if they used Blackboard before, that the technical requirements to use it were the same or that new equipment the students had would work with Blackboard. For example, some students using unsupported browsers could not see links and quizzes. This link is meant to try to prevent that problem.

### Making Sure Your Device and Browser Will Work with Blackboard

Use the "Computer Requirements" link **before** you login. It's in the center of the login screen.

**Tip:** If your browser is not listed in the lower right hand corner, then you need to try another one.

The image shows a screenshot of the Blackboard Learn login page for Wharton County Junior College. The browser address bar shows the URL <https://wcjc.blackboard.com/>. The page features a red header with the college logo and name. Below the header are three main sections: Blackboard Login, Student Help Desk, and Additional Information. The Blackboard Login section includes a login form with fields for Username and Password, and a Login button. The Student Help Desk section provides contact information for IT and links to support resources. The Additional Information section includes links for Distance Education, Faculty resources, and Downloadable Resources. Several callouts and tips are overlaid on the page:

- A red callout box points to the browser address bar: "Save this URL in case the WCJC site is down (rare) and Blackboard is still up."
- A blue callout box in the top right corner: "Tip: An 8-week course is hard. Be sure you match online learning. If you have never taken an online class, consider this useful self-test."
- A red callout box on the left side: "Read this and this." with arrows pointing to the "Login Help" link and the password change instruction.
- A blue callout box in the bottom left: "Tip: If you are on a public computer, logout when you are done. Blackboard stays open."
- A red callout box in the center: "Use the 'Computer Requirements' link before you login. Having a new device or that your device worked last term won't protect you. Your device and your current browser must match Blackboard. Students are not seeing links, not see all quiz questions, and so on. Check first!" with an arrow pointing to the "Computer Requirements" link.
- A red callout box on the right: "If you need to download a browser, use these links. In general, Firefox seems safest." with an arrow pointing to the "Downloadable Resources" section.

This is a “pathway” course and it is set up to help you if you follow the “path.” A “pathway” course is one of two broad types of distance learning courses that the Distance Learning Department encourages faculty to use. It is called a “pathway” course because it tries to provide a safe “path” for taking a distance learning course.

Thus far the students I have seen fail were entering through some shortcut method. Example, they clicked on a written exam and started trying to write. They didn’t realize that they could have seen all possible questions and prepared ahead if they had stayed on the “path.”

### How to Enter Your Blackboard Course and Stay on the “Path”

Once in Blackboard, enter your course by clicking on it under the Course List—and **no** other way. For example, based on student comments, students who enter through some of the shortcut methods do **not** even see the instructions for exams or assignments.

The screenshot shows the Blackboard user interface for Wharton County Junior College. The top navigation bar includes the college logo, the user name 'Connie Bibus 329', and menu items for 'My Institution', 'Courses', 'Community', and 'Services'. Below this, there are sections for 'My Institution', 'Notifications Dashboard', 'Add Module', and 'Personalize Page'. The main content area is divided into three columns: 'Tools', 'My Announcements', and 'Course List'. The 'Tools' column contains links for Announcements, Calendar, Tasks, My Grades, Send Email, Personal Information, Goals, Browse NBC Learn, NBC Learn Playlist, Course Materials, and Course Materials Hub. The 'My Announcements' section shows no recent announcements. The 'Course List' section is highlighted with a blue arrow and a blue-bordered box containing instructions. A yellow-bordered box with a yellow arrow points to the 'Send Email' link in the Tools menu, containing a caution. A blue-bordered box with a blue arrow points to the 'Course List' section, containing a list of steps for success in a pathway course.

**Caution:** Do not use this email. Instead, email using Blackboard Messages. Messages is available on the left menu within the Blackboard Course.

**For success in this “pathway” course, do this:**

1. Look for your History course in the Course List.
2. Click on it.

If you log in when the course first opens, the course will open with a Read Me First page that tells you what to do.

If you come in later, click on Read Me First on the left menu.

### How to Go Directly to Getting Started

If you enter the course **when it opens** (and you should), Blackboard automatically displays the required items for Getting Started—including the required “introductory tasks” you must do before the date in the Course Schedule. It also covers additional steps you must do immediately within the course.

**Tip:** If you enter the course **late** and Blackboard displays the Home Page, click on “Read Me First” on the left menu.